

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04414 01 OF 02 021326Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 ICAE-00 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 IO-13
HA-05 OES-09 EB-08 COME-00 ABF-01 OMB-01 MCT-02
SAA-01 SES-02 SSM-03 FAA-00 CAB-02 DOTE-00 OC-06
CCO-00 /125 W

-----046292 021351Z /44

O P 021250Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9035
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4414

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: AUGUST 2, 1978 - 1300 HOURS
LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4365 (DTG 011119Z AUG 78)

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04414 01 OF 02 021326Z

1. SUMMARY: THERE WAS AGAIN FIGHTING IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA
AND A SYRIAN SOLDIER WAS REPORTED KILLED IN SINN AL FIL.
A BATTALION OF LEBANESE ARMY REMAINS BOGGED DOWN IN THE
KAWKABA AREA. PRESIDENT SARKIS SAID THAT THE ENTRY OF
THE ARMY INTO THE SOUTH IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF "A MORE
COMPREHENSIVE ROLE WHICH THE ARMY WILL PLAY IN ALL PARTS OF
LEBANON." PORT WORKERS ALLEGEDLY ASKED SYRIAN PRESIDENT

ASSAD TO REOPEN THE BEIRUT PORT. THE LEBANESE POUND WEAKENED SUBSTANTIALLY TO LL 2.94 TO THE DOLLAR. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION.

A. THERE WAS FIGHTING IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREAS OF ASHRAFIYAH, AIN AR-RUMMANEH AND FURN ASH-SHUBBAK BETWEEN SYRIAN FORCES AND RIGHTIST MILITIAS DURING THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF AUGUST 1. A SYRIAN SOLDIER WAS SHOT DEAD IN SINN AL-FIL ON AUGUST 1, ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES.

B. IN ADDITION, THERE WERE THREE PERSONS KILLED AND 26 WOUNDED IN WEST BEIRUT. THE WEST BEIRUT INCIDENTS INCLUDED ARTILLERY OR ROCKETS WHICH IMPACTED IN THE CORNICHE MAZRAA AREA (KILLING THREE PERSONS AND WOUNDING OTHERS), SMALL ARMS AND POSSIBLY ARTILLERY OR ROCKET IMPACTS AT THE CORAL BEACH CLUB (PERHAPS SPILLOVER FROM FIRING ON THE IRAQI EMBASSY ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE CLUB) AND, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, SMALL ARMS ROUNDS "FALLING ON THE BEACH AREA FROM THE RIVERA HOTEL TO RAMLAT AL-BAYDA."

C. LEBANESE MILITARY SOURCES SAY THE WEST BEIRUT ROUNDS CAME FROM RIGHTIST MILITIA GUNS IN EAST BEIRUT. THERE IS GOOD CHANCE, HOWEVER, THAT THESE ROUNDS WERE FROM PALESTINIAN OR LEBANESE LEFTIST GUNNERS IN THE WEST. THE IRAQI EMBASSY WAS FIRED UPON AT A TIME WHEN FATAH IS CARRYING ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04414 01 OF 02 021326Z

AN ACTIVE AND VIOLENT ANTI-IRAQ CAMPAIGN. THE ROUNDS IN CORNICHE MAZRAA MAY HAVE BEEN OVERSHOTS FROM CLASHES BETWEEN FATAH AND IRAQI-SUPPORTED REJECTIONISTS IN CAMPS SOUTH OF THE MAZRAA AREA.

3. THE ARMY IN THE SOUTH.

A. A BATTALION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY REMAINS BOGGED DOWN IN THE KAWKABA AREA, UNABLE TO ADVANCE BECAUSE OF FIRE FROM ISRAELI BACKED CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AND UNABLE TO RETREAT WITHOUT DEALING SERIOUS BLOW TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S REMAINING VESTIGES OF AUTHORITY.

B. THE GOL IS MAINTAINING THAT SHELLING WHICH BLOCKED THE ARMY'S ADVANCE CAME FROM ISRAELIS, NOT LEBANESE RIGHTISTS. (COMMENT: OUR SOURCES INDICATE IDF HAS NOT FIRED. END COMMENT.)

C. SA'AD HADDAD, RIGHTIST COMMANDER OPPOSING THE ARMY'S ADVANCE, HAS ANNOUNCED HIS REJECTION OF ORDERS TO REPORT TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, ACCORDING TO THE PHALANGE PARTY'S RADIO, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ISSUED THEM

UNDER DURESS FROM SYRIA. BEIRUT PRESS ALSO CARRIED REUTERS
STORY QUOTING CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN AS SAYING THAT THEY WOULD
"FIGHT TO THE FINISH TO BLOCK THE ADVANCE OF THE LEBANESE
ARMY."

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04414 02 OF 02 021346Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4414

4. GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS.

A. PRESIDENT SARKIS, IN A SPEECH MARKING ARMY DAY ON AUGUST
1, PRAISED THE ARMY'S REBUILDING EFFORTS AND SAID THAT THE
ENTRY OF THE ARMY INTO THE SOUTH IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF
"A MORE COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ROLE WHICH THE ARMY WILL PLAY
IN ALL PARTS OF LEBANON."

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04414 02 OF 02 021346Z

B. ARMY COMMANDER KHOURY ANNOUNCED THAT CONSCRIPTION WILL BEGIN IN 1979. HE SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE PART OF THE EFFORT TO BUILD A "NEW ARMY." MEANWHILE KHOURY AND SARKIS TRADED COMPLIMENTS WITH ONE ANOTHER ON THEIR "WISE SILENCE" IN THE FACE OF CRITICISM FOR INACTION.

C. THE PRIME MINISTER, SALIM AL-HOSS, RESPONDED TO PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES WITH A STATEMENT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT: (1) IS DETERMINED TO "END ALL SEMBLANCES OF ILLEGAL CONDITIONS" (A EUPHEMISM FOR DISARMING THE VARIOUS MILITIAS). . . WITH THE SPEED THAT AVILABLE POTENTIALS PERMIT" (A EUPHEMISM FOR NO TIME SOON); (2) WILL TAKE ACTION TO CLOSE AN ILLEGAL RADIO STATIONS; (3) HAS MADE POLITICAL DECISION TO END THE ARMY TO THE SOUTH, BUT LEFT THE TIMING UP TO THE MILITARY COMMAND; (4) IS DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT CONSCRIPTION AND TO SEEK LEGAL AUTHORITY TO REMOVE OFFICERS IDENTIFIED WITH ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER DURING THE CIVIL WAR; (5) HAS A SECURITY PLAN IN FORCE IN WHICH LEBANESE AND ARAB DETERRENT FORCE UNITS COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES; AND (6) IS PLAGUED BY "MALFEASANCE AND INEFFICIENCY" STEMMING FROM THE 1975-76 CIVIL WAR.

4. PORT WORKERS PROTEST.

THE SAHAFIYAH NEWS AGENCY REPORTED THAT THE FAMILIES OF PORT WORKERS CABLED SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD, AUGUST 1, ASKING HIM TO REOPEN THE PORT. THE FAMILIES REPORTEDLY INCLUDED A DENUNCIATION OF THE PHALANGE AND NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTIES AND CALLED FOR THE CRUSHING OF THE PHALANGE HEADQUARTERS NEAR THE PORT, AS IT IS "A DESTRUCTIVE GERM" AND "THE SOURCE OF ALL UNREST AND CRIMES."

5. POUND WEAKENS.

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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04414 02 OF 02 021346Z

LEBANESE POUND WEAKENED SUBSTANTIALY ON AUGUST 1, WHEN IT FELL TO LL 2.94 TO THE DOLLAR. (POUND HAD BEEN AT LL 2.90 TO THE DOLLAR ON JULY 31. FALL PROBABLY REFLECTS IN PART FAILURE OF LEBANESE ARMY TO GET TO TIBNIN.)

6. AIRPORT STATUS.

AIRCRAFT OPERATED NORMALLY THROUGH BEIRUT AIRPORT. CONTRADICTING PRESS REPORT OF A "RUSH ON TICKET COUNTERS," FULLY

BOOKED AND WAIT-LISTED FLIGHTS CONTINUE TO DEPART 40 PERCENT
EMPTY ON AVERAGE. LOAD FACTORS ON MEA'S DEPARTING FLIGHTS WERE
54 PERCENT IN WEEK PRECEEDING EMBASSY ADVISORY ANNOUNCEMENT
AND HAVE RISEN TO ONLY 57-58 PERCENT SINCE JULY 27. GROSS
PASSENGER DEPARTURES ARE ONLY 2-3 PERCENT HIGHER THAN 1977
AVERAGE FOR SAME WEEK.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, MOPS, LE
To: STATE SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
Type: TE
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